1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
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836 grown-up men should have sexual relations with legal wives who may be under 13 years of age.

836 Pre-marital cohabitation is not practised to any great extent; for it is taboo between fellow clansmen; and as most of the clans are localized a boy of one clan has little opportunity of 848 sleeping with a girl of another. In the quite exceptional case [847] of a girl conceiving by a youth who was not her betrothed, it was stated that resort might be had to abortifacients. If these were unsuccessful, the girl would be married off as quickly as possible to her fiancé, who would accept the child as his own. The child would suffer no legal disabilities, and in fact would occupy the privileged position of an "eldest son". *Per contra* this custom may explain why it is that, among the Hausa, the eldest son is treated as a stranger.

585 Katab girls are only married between October and March, i.e. during the dry season, and not (as among the Kagoro) during 591 a particular month of the wet season. The bride spends her first year in the hut of her husband's mother, sleeping with her husband at night. At the end of the year she is given her own hut and is provided by the husband's mother with the necessary 853 cooking utensils. After the birth of a child no sexual relations may occur between husband and wife until the child is weaned, 834 the reason for this rule being based on the observation that conception interferes with lactation.

584 It remains to add that members of the same sub-clan frequently assist each other in procuring wives. It is not 613 uncommon for a man to hand over to a friend the bride-price 431 obtained for his daughter or niece in order that the friend may have the means to provide himself with a wife. The money may be treated as a loan, but is often given as a free gift.

586 It has been indicated already that no Katab husband can be sure that his wife of to-day will be living with him one year 851 hence. She may be approached by a clansman of her husband (but belonging to another subdivision) and invited to share his life. If she prefers to remain with her husband she will say "No"; but if she wishes a change she will say "Yes", and refer him to her parents, to whom he will have to pay a bride-price. He may approach the parents in the first instance, and they may bring pressure to bear on their daughter. And so off she goes, perhaps enceinte by her first husband. It does not

2: Gunn E-4 (no date) 1956 FF38 Katab FF38

but subsequently spends three or four months " in her own home " (presumably her paternal compound? In societies where secondary marriage is common, a special connection with the mother, wherever she may reside, is usual, however).

According to Meek, co-wives of the father's mother attend the birth. The umbilical cord is severed with a razor, and was formerly planted with a seed yam which, when mature, was fed to the child: current practice is not stated. The placenta is casually buried " at the back of the house "; no beliefs are attached to it, according to Meek, but his diagram of a Katab compound shows that the mother's " bean-garden " lies at the back of her house. It was stated in 1921 that boys are circumcised at birth, but Meek does not mention circumcision.

Naming, usually a more or less casual matter, is performed two days after birth. If the mother has lost a number of children, the *elenowum* (presumably of the father's lineage) may at this time preside over ceremonial beer-drinking with prayers. Every child's uvula is clipped on the naming day.

According to Meek, the first child is taken when two months old to the home of the wife's parents who, after an interval of a month, summon the husband and hold a feast. " Prayers are offered for the child's welfare by the wife's father or brother, who then delivers him back to the husband, saying, ' Take this child in full payment of the labour which you [when a suitor] expended on my farm.' The second child has to be redeemed, at the present day, by a money payment of seven shillings, which is regarded as compensation to the wife's parents for expenditure incurred on her . . . trousseau. If the payments were not made the wife's parents could retain the child. . . " Meek does not indicate how the time of this ceremonial fits in with the return of the wife to her parents' compound for a period of months, as already described.

During the period of lactation it is common practice for a mother to cover her entire body and head with red ochre, to improve her supply of milk. Until the child is weaned, intercourse between mother and father is prohibited, this period lasting up to three years. Boys sleep in their mother's hut till they are five years of age, girls until they marry.

Meek writes of " adoption " among the Katab, which might be described more accurately as " sharing " or " lending " children, " to a respected paternal relative who has fewer children . . . or requires an additional worker on his farm. Male children are not handed over to a maternal relative in this way; but . . . a man has to ransom his second child [of whichever sex] by a money payment to his wife's parents. Female children are, however, sometimes handed over to the mother's parents; but when such children marry, the mother's parents are not entitled to receive the bride-price."

Initiation

There appears to be no record of circumcision among Katab proper. Tribal initiation, according to Meek, takes the form of initiation into the public cult of *obwai*,[84] associated apparently with the private ancestral cult, but there are no elaborate initiation rites. Children, presumably boys only, of four to eight years are taken to the *obwai* hut, warned to be obedient to their parents and given food. The short ceremony ends with a form of baptism in a stream, the smearing of the boys' heads with mahogany oil, and a feast in the village. Though it is not made clear, this initiation no doubt occurs at the appearance of the *obwai*. It appears that no personal insignia are issued to the individual, at this time, at least (contrast Kaje, p. 112 below).

Boys receive their facial markings later, " some years after they have begun to engage in agricultural work." Girls receive their markings in connection with their primary marriage (see below), probably at much the same age as boys, since girls marry very young. Marking is apparently done individually and without particular rites or ceremonies.

[84] See below, p. 79.